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INDUSTRIAL TRAINING FOR CRIPPLES IN RUSSIA

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The care of cripples in Russia has received but scant attention and throughout the empire there are but few agencies devoted to the improvement of their condition. In St. Petersburg there is one institution, however, which has carried the industrial training of cripples to a point which renders it almost unique. It prepares even the most seriously handicapped cripples for a useful occupation, and from this viewpoint its work cannot fail to be of interest to those identified with similar efforts in other parts of the world.

The need of the crippled and deformed for some kind of systematic training was strongly impressed on Prof. N. A. Welliaminoff, surgeon to the Czar, and head of the great Maximilian Hospital at St. Petersburg. In casting about for some trade in which instruction might be given, the manufacture of orthopedic apparatus appeared to offer exceptional promise. This also was recommended by a double advantage; while some cripples were being benefited by the training for an occupation, other cripples were provided at the same time through the lowered cost and improved quality of the appliances required by their deformity. The approval of the Directors of the Maximilian Hospital was secured and an orthopedic workshop for trade training of cripples was opened Oct. 14, 1897, under the patronage of Princess Eugenie. The shop is affiliated with

the orthopedic department of the Maximilian Hospital.

From the start the physicians identified with the hospital took a great interest in the project and up to the present time have provided for its support by obtaining contributions from the nobility. During the first year the workshop was quartered in a suite of three rooms in the hospital building. At the present time it occupies fourteen rooms on one of the lower floors of the same building. At first there were but two pupils, and during the first few years instruction during the day only was provided without resident accommodation. Preference regarding admission was given to young cripples. A teacher who had been trained in the school for cripples at Helsingfors, Finland, was secured, and as branch subjects she gave instruction in cabinet making, spinning, weaving and brush making. The work on orthopedic apparatus was supervised by the physician in charge of the workshop. At first the production of appliances was very naturally limited to simple apparatus, but during the course of the first two years thirty-eight patients of the hospital received their orthopedic braces free. It was difficult, however, to meet the requirements in the matter of special shoes and complicated metal appliances, and as a result in 1899, a special shoe-making department was installed and placed in charge of a specialist. In 1900, the necessary lathes and machine tools were acquired, a forge was erected and a machinist and apparatus maker were employed.

But up to this point it had been impossible to provide for the very seriously maimed cripples, as, for instance, the one-armed and the armless, the teachers in the workshop not being acquainted

with the methods of instruction for persons so deformed. There was no suitable teacher in Russia, and the institution at Copenhagen, Denmark, had but three available teachers, none of whom they could spare. The oldest pupil at the St. Petersburg workshop, P. N. Alexandrow, was therefore sent to the Copenhagen school to learn the methods there in vogue. Completing his course in 1903, he returned to his own institution and was appointed teacher in the workshop, remaining there up to the present time. This brought about a considerable improvement, but there was still need for the use of apparatus in certain processes which would lessen the labor involved. In order to make the mechanical part of the work as perfect as possible, there was therefore added to the staff of the workshop a key-maker, W. G. Sorokoumow, who was himself a cripple.

In 1904, the war in which Russia was engaged with Japan caused an augmented demand for orthopedic appliances, and the workshop was considerably enlarged.

It was found that transportation to and from the workshop each day was a serious problem for some of the cripples, and there was therefore founded in 1901 the "Association for the Care of Cripples Learning a Trade." The object of this organization was to provide a resident home in conjunction with the workshop, and to provide the additional care necessary to train the cripples for careers as industrious workers and useful members of the community.

Cripples between the ages of 14 and 30 are received for instruction at the workshop. The term of instruction for those with reasonable capacity for work averages about four years. At

the expiration of this time if the cripple is in a position to do independent work, even though this work might necessarily be extremely simple, three alternatives are considered: Either he remains in the workshop and receives wages, or remains in the workshop and is partly paid for his labor, or he receives a recommendation and is employed in a private shop.

Some of the cripples are, of course, so severely handicapped that they can be assigned no fixed period of training. Such pupils receive a certain amount for their work, even during the course of their instruction. Those who work hard and make satisfactory progress receive every month between two and five rubles¹ for clothing. The object of these payments is to accustom them to rely for support on the money which they themselves earn and not to get them in the habit of depending exclusively on charity.

The more able workers go into the orthopedic department of the hospital. After four years of training they receive wages of between twelve and fifteen rubles a month. Such pupils not only clothe themselves at their own expense, but also pay three rubles a month for their room in the home, or else rent quarters near the workshop.

During the first ten years of its existence the workshop received 116 men and 11 women. Of these there have been discharged 74 men and 3 women. All further analysis will be made on the basis of this first ten year period.

The cripples admitted are divided into three classes according to the degree of loss of working powers. To the first class belong those afflicted with serious loss, such as amputation of both arms, or the complete crippling of them; or

1. A ruble is equivalent to approximately 50 cents.

amputation or crippling of one arm, especially the right, and particularly in the case of such sufferers as have no personal talent for handicraft; or the loss of several fingers. Among the pupils in the workshop, twenty have been in this class.

In the second class are cripples with injuries to the body or the limbs, those suffering from some progressive disease; and those who have recovered from a serious wound. In such cases outside assistance and the general conditions of work are of the greatest importance. Excessive exertion would be injurious and tend to aggravate their crippled condition. There have been thirty-four of this class in the workshop.

To the third class belong cripples with amputated lower limbs and deformity of the limbs, whether congenital, rachitic or due to other causes. The ability of cripples of this class to work is limited by the difficulty of their power of locomotion, and is thus largely dependent on the usefulness of artificial limbs and the correct choice of occupation. There have been twenty-five of this class in the workshop.

The following table gives a survey of the occupations taught the cripple, together with a statement of the number trained in each trade.

Trade	Workers trained
Orthopedic apparatus.....	16
Key-making	33
Ordinary shoemaking.....	38
Cabinet-making	12
Turning	3
Brush-making	2
Basket-making	4
Weaving and sewing.....	4
Saddlery	3
Tailoring	12

The following statement will show the results of the training of those that have been discharged:

Twelve engage independently in the occupation taught them in the workshop. One woman teaches manual training, one works in the shop of an orthopedic institute, six work in private shops, four in their own villages, five are employed in various non-mechanical occupations, one is a porter, one is an accountant, two are domestic servants, one is a hostler, three have learned specialties not taught in the workshop and are now working independently for themselves (two girls as ironers and one in dental work), thirteen men have disappeared, three were taken home by their relatives, and seven refused to work.

There are at present in the workshop three teachers at a salary of 30 to 75 rubles a month. Four instructors work part time earning from 10 to 25 rubles a month; seven are assistants of the masters; one woman assists the inspectress, and one man acts as secretary earning from 10 to 20 rubles a month. There are twelve older pupils and ten younger ones and two are in service in a private house.

Quite a number of the pupils have been disabled soldiers. Excluding these there were sixty-six men who had completed the course of instruction. Of these, twenty have gone outside and become good workmen, and twenty-eight are employed in the workshop. This shows 72 per cent. of the cripples as able to work after proper training. The outside workers, or 30 per cent. of the total, labor satisfactorily under normal conditions of industry. Those within the workshop, or 42 per cent. of the total, work under preferentially

favorable conditions. Among these latter are the cripples of the first and second classes to which reference has already been made, whose ability to work is largely dependent on their environment. In the St. Petersburg shop the workers are protected from over-exertion. They work seven and one-half hours a day and have an intermission of three hours at noon. During the summer the pupils have the regular workman's vacation and the "Association for the Care of Cripples Learning a Trade" provides a stay in the country.

During the period we are analyzing, the workshop produced 7,785 pieces of orthopedic apparatus, in addition to 1,976 non-orthopedic articles. Of the orthopedic appliances, 804 were given to various philanthropic agencies at a third or a half of their value. Assistance was thus rendered to 611 cripples. The expenses for a recent year were, in round figures, 95,000 rubles, while the income of the workshop was 92,000 rubles, not including rent, light or heat. It will thus be seen that the cost was very low, especially in view of the fact that industrial training for graduated pupils is included in the account.

The experience of this Russian institution has been duplicated in several other places. The great institution for cripples at Copenhagen found that while some of its graduates might be successful in commercial competition with normal workers, many by reason of serious handicap required special conditions of work. Perhaps the need was for apparatus adapted to their deficiency, perhaps for adjustable chairs or stools, perhaps for a rest period in the middle of the day. It has been found in England, Belgium and France as well as in Denmark and Russia that the prime purpose can be best attained by a spe-

cial workshop inaugurated by philanthropic initiative and subsidy, but maintained on a thoroughly self-supporting or profitable basis.

There is need at the present time for more workshops of this character. Their value is unquestioned from both the humanitarian and economic standpoints. They make helpless cripples into self-respecting members of the community and burdens on society into productive workers.

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